

Passamaquoddy Tribe- Pleasant Point

Overview

Pleasant Point Reservation is located in the easternmost region of the United States, in the town of Perry, Washington County, Maine, on a narrow peninsula leading to the island community of Eastport. The Reservation consists of 100 acres deeded to the tribe by the state plus 112 acres of annexed land adjacent to the original parcel. Please refer to the attached map of tribal lands for location.

The Passamaquoddy Tribe, also known as Sipayik (meaning: along the edge) is an indigenous Native American Tribe of eastern Maine/Maritime Canada. Culturally, the Passamaquoddy are one of several tribes of the Abnaki group. The Passamaquoddy people have inhabited this region of ADowneast@ Maine and Maritime Canada since the time of their forebears and thus have a strong sense of belonging to the land.

Pleasant Point is one of two Reservations of the Passamaquoddy Tribe. Indian Township Reservation is located inland about 50 miles from Pleasant Point. Each of the two Reservations has separate governing systems, and the federal government recognizes each Elected Tribal Council form the major governing body for the Tribe. Tribal members elect a Tribal Governor, who serves as the chief administrator for the community. Passamaquoddy Indian Township and Pleasant Point Council hold joint council meetings with both governing bodies. Serving the Council and Governor is the Lieutenant Governor and an extensive staff of Tribal administrators including program managers for Bureau of Indian Affairs, Indian Health Service, and other federal contracts or grants.

The Passamaquoddy Tribe has an evolving land. The current 212 acres comprise the Reservation and annexed areas that provide for housing, economic development, and recreation to tribal members. The impact of the Passamaquoddy people on this evolving land resource will have to be carefully managed so that it will retain its environmental qualities and so that it will be preserved for future generations. The balance of badly needed economic development and long-term preservation of the environment is the focus of the tribe=s environmental program. There are other land holdings off the Reservation, in the towns of Perry and Robbinston, which are expected to provide long-term economic benefit through sustainable development. These fee and trust lands will also have to be carefully managed. Knowledge of the actual quality and specific makeup of the various lands, waters, and air is just beginning to be explored. Good mapping depicting boundary lines exists for various parcels but comprehensive mapping programs that facilitate a clear view of tribal land holdings, natural resources, and environmental quality are just beginning.

The Reservation is bordered on its north side by Passamaquoddy Bay and on its south side by Cobscook Bay. These two bays are part of the traditional fishing grounds of the Passamaquoddy Tribe. In addition to these water resources are various other wetlands, lakes, and ponds on tribal lands in the towns of Perry and Robbinston

This Tribe has identified the following five objectives for developing its Tribal environmental Program; 1) All Tribal waters will be clean and healthy; 2) all Tribal lands, ecosystems, homes, and workplaces will have clean and healthy air; 3) Tribal government will work to continue its traditional practice of protecting and preserving the wondrous resources of the Great Mother Earth; 4) No waste or pollution with threaten Tribal Resources; 5) Foster environmental learning and stewardship among the Tribes youth, the community and Tribal leadership.

Accomplishments

The Passamaquoddy Tribe at Pleasant Point Environmental Department works under these broad goals:

- Protect Tribal waters and related aquatic and marine ecosystems
- Protect foods and medicines consumed by Tribal members
- Foster environmental learning and stewardship among the Tribe's Youth, the community, Tribal leadership, and the general public
- Protect Tribal lands and waters from improperly disposed wastes and accidental chemical spills

EPA provides grant funding under a Performance Partnership Grant to the Tribe to support the tribe in meeting their environmental goals.

Water Quality

Salt water testing, in cooperation with the Cobscook Bay Resource Center and the DMR, of both Passamaquoddy and Cobscook Bays analyzes fecal coliform and phytoplankton. Shoreline surveys are conducted to look for problem septic systems. These monitoring efforts are to protect and restore clam flats in the area.

Fish tissue testing has been done in both bays for heavy metals and dioxins. There are plans to expand this program in the future years. The department is currently improving study design and is working on a subsistence survey to gather more information on consumption of wild game and fish.

Fresh Water quality parameters of streams and ponds on Tribal trust blueberry lands in Columbia Falls have taken place. Monitoring of water withdrawal for irrigation is ongoing at T19.

The department is actively participating in ME DEP's rulemaking for permitting of toxicity effluent discharges. The department has voiced concerns of sediment contamination, importance of a healthy Passamaquoddy Bay, and the need to access chemicals that are not being studied or analyzed.

Wetlands

Wetland delineation, function, and value assessments are being done for all wetlands on the reservation and surrounding fee lands. Wetlands support animals and plants that are culturally important to the Tribe. Tribal Council has reviewed and approved the Department's Wetlands Management Plan.

Natural Resource Inventory

Tribal lands are being surveyed to map all natural resources from soils to wildlife habitats. These inventories provide the information necessary to make land use decisions important to the Passamaquoddy Tribe.

GIS & GPS

All mapping is done utilizing GIS computer programs and a GPS unit to collect data in the field. This technology allows the tribe to have updated maps for the Tribal infrastructure, housing, and natural resource information.

Lead Program

This program is conducted in conjunction with the Health Center. Tribal children are tested for lead. Testing is available for housing and soils. Lead hazard awareness is done through the health center, housing authority, and the daycare center.

Air Quality Program

This is a brand new program. The department goal is to contribute to the regional air quality monitoring in Washington County. Community awareness of ozone and alerts for high ozone forecasts were achieved using Sipayik News Bulletin and Tribal TV.

FERC Dam Relicensing

Two dams affecting Tribal lands are in the process of federal relicensing; GNP at Canada Falls Lake and Domtar at the St. Croix River. Both environmental departments monitor these proceedings, attend meetings, and report to Joint Council.

Recycling Program

The Pleasant Point Recycling Center is open three days per week and accepts, paper, plastic, tin and glass. For more information, contact Erica Francis by leaving a message at BRS, 853-6085, or the Tribal Office Building, 853-2600.